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SIX LETTERS TO A FRIEND, ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

BY

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TO

JONAS HANWAY, Esq.

THE FRIEND OF THE PUBLIC,

THE AVOWED AND GENEROUS PATRON

OF THE POOR,

THE FOLLOWING PAGES,

SACRED TO THE CAUSE OF

GENERAL GOOD,

ARE RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

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LETTERS to a FRIEND,

ON THE SUBJECT OF

SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

LETTER I.

Wye, Sept. 17, 1785.

DEAR SIR,

YOU aſk my opinion of the new Inſtitution which ſeems to ſpread rapidly in many parts of England.—A pleaſing fact will aſſure you of my approbation, when I inform you that I have been ſo happy as to have eſtabliſhed a Sunday School in this

 place;

place; but as I wiſh to convince you that theſe eſtabliſhments have every motive of reaſon and juſtice, ſuperadded to thoſe of tenderneſs and humanity, I more readily comply with your deſire, and enter fully and largely on the ſubject.

I threaten you with two terrible words, *fully and largely*; for as it is a theme that I dwell upon with peculiar pleaſure, my Letters (I ſhall write you more than one) will not be ſhort. See what you have drawn upon yourſelf by your requeſt.

The benevolent deſign of a School of this nature, certainly originates from that ſweet charity which connects us together in our way through life; and it begins, where it reaſonably ought to begin, with the foundation

foundation of early and helpleſs youth.—The truth of thoſe well-known lines of *Pope* is allowed on all hands;

'Tis Education forms the future mind;
And as the Twig is bent, the Tree's inclin'd.

Ought not the Twig then to be directed to the right way?—How cruel to ſuffer the tender Plant of the human mind to be warped and turned aſide to the wrong, without ſtretching forth the friendly hand of happier direction!—This plan affectionately attempts to give the yet unbiaſſed mind this happier direction; and though it may be thought or ſaid (for I know it has been ſaid ſometimes where it has not been thought) that Parents will be led, by

natural affection, to act thus, and ſpare others the trouble; yet it ſhould be remembered that *all* Parents, however they may be led by inclination, have not ability:—From an unhappy inattention to themſelves when young, and from an habitual courſe of thoughtleſſneſs when grown up, many have loſt the power of diſcharging towards their Children that firſt and moſt ſacred of all duties—the care of their ſouls:—a care which is the foundation of every excellence, and without which you are very ſenſible ſuch neglected Children can never become ſober, honeſt, humble and induſtrious men.

What therefore muſt become of ſuch Children? *Rouſſeau*, and ſuch as think with him, will anſwer, "Leave them

them to themſelves."—But will Reaſon, will Nature, will You, anſwer in this manner?—No, ſurely: when theſe neglected Little-ones lift up the tender hand and pleading eye, and call with pathetic force for aſſiſtance, this *divine* plan—is my expreſſion too ſtrong?—well then, this *excellent* plan, in anſwer to ſuch juſt as well as affecting calls, ſteps forward, performs the tender and parental duty—— "takes up the little Children in its "arms, lays its hands upon them, "and bleſſes them."

Have you never obſerved the idle and looſe behaviour of Children in many places on a Sunday?—It has given you pain, I am ſure, to ſee it:—What! and ſhall theſe "have no "Shepherd?" no affectionate Parent, no friendly hand to direct them bet-

ter?—Forbid it Humanity, Juſtice, Charity!—Nay, forbid it *Intereſt!*—To you indeed I need not mention this additional motive; but with the many, if Humanity, Juſtice, Charity fail to influence, Intereſt will have its natural and proper weight.

Forbid it then Intereſt—for who would keep in his houſe, a ſervant on whoſe principles he could have no dependance? What ſecurity, what ſafety, for your property or perſon, is there with ſuch a one? Surely then it is the intereſt of every one to promote a plan which endeavours to render the Children of the Poor, induſtrious, humble, ſober and honeſt, for this plain reaſon—that it is the wiſh of every man to have induſtrious, humble, ſober and honeſt ſervants.—You remember the inſtructive tale

of

of David Mallet and his Servant.*— From a fact like that, as well as from reaſon, it ſtrikes the mind in a moment with conviction, that a plan by which

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* The fellow who waited at table, and often heard the lecture on the *Non credenda* of the Free-thinkers repeated, being thoroughly convinced that for any of his miſdeeds he ſhould have no after-account to give, was reſolved to profit by the doctrine, and made off with many things of value, particularly the plate. He was, however, ſoon retaken, and on being urged by his maſter to give a reaſon for his infamous behaviour, reſolutely ſaid—Sir, I had heard you ſo often talk of the impoſſibility of a future ſtate, and that after death there was no reward for virtue, or puniſhment for vice, that I was tempted to commit the robbery.—— Well, but, you raſcal! replied Mallet, had you no fear of the gallows?—Sir, ſaid the fellow, looking ſternly at his maſter, what is it to you if I had a mind to venture that?— You had removed my *greateſt* terror; why ſhould I fear the *leſs*?

which *we are ſure* ſomething at leaſt of the duties and a ſenſe of religion are inſtilled into the minds of thoſe who will be engaged in the humble ſtate of ſervitude—(if, conſidering the number of *fine gentlemen-ſervants* that we ſee, it is not an improper term to ſtyle it an *humble* ſtate) that a ſcheme by which *we ſee* the Children of the poor are not wholly left to negligent or incapable Parents for their religious concerns, calls for our attention and encouragement.

I will not quote the trite Proverb, that "Idleneſs is the root of every "evil"—but I will venture to aſſert, that the idleneſs which is ſo general on a Sunday, is the moſt fatal of every other kind; for it ſtupifies and extinguiſhes all ſenſe of religion.

And

And without ſuch a ſenſe, can you expect diligence, induſtry, and ſobriety, in the poorer ſort of people? Can you demand or expect induſtry from thoſe to whom you have given no ſenſe of religion?—It is beginning at the wrong end—it is demanding brick without ſtraw — attempting uſeleſs labour which muſt infallibly come to nothing.—With equal wiſdom might a man build a houſe, *without* foundation, on the unſubſtantial ſand, and then wonder it did not endure as if the foundation were laid properly and deeply within the ſolid rock.

Does any reaſonable man then expect that Induſtry ſhould engage and employ the poor in *the week?*—Let Religion engage and employ them on *the*

the Sunday: otherwiſe the expecta tion becomes no longer reaſonable; and we are not to wonder if it be diſappointed, becauſe ill-founded.

And ſurely it will be readily allowed, that if this foundation be neceſſary, the proper ſeaſon for laying it muſt be in childhood and youth, if we would proceed with any well-grounded hopes of ſucceſs.

All this allowed, as I think it muſt be, the queſtion remains—what is the moſt eligible method?—I anſwer, in my opinion, this of the Sunday School——*An attentive inſtruction of Children in a collected body by proper perſons on that day.*

I confeſs, it gave me the ſincereſt pleaſure to find this deſign promoted,

a few

a few weeks ago, by a public meeting at the *Paul's-Head Tavern*, at which that moſt benevolent of men, JONAS HANWAY, took the chair. You and I have often conſidered this excellent man's character with peculiar pleaſure—and here we behold him again, as uſual, in an amiable light—a reſpectable veteran, who "though (as he expreſſes himſelf*) "a ſtorm-"beaten ancient man, favoured by "Heaven with a long life of in-"ceſſant toil—tired, and inclined *to* "*go to reſt*"—yet ſteps forward to take an active part in this commendable ſcheme.

It is highly agreeable, to remark with what rapidity this plan for Sunday inſtruction has ſpread in different parts

* In a Letter to a *London Clergyman*.

parts of England:—And is it not ſurpriſing too?—No, not ſurpriſing, when the goodneſs and uſe of it are conſidered:—generous Engliſhmen need only to have an uſeful deſign pointed out to them; they then perſue and improve upon it with readineſs and vigour.

When I look back on the length of this, I believe I muſt beſpeak your patience for my future Letters. —What conviction you will receive from this, or them, I ſay not—If I may believe your aſſurances, (and I think I may) you will at leaſt receive pleaſure in hearing from,

Dear Sir,

Your's faithfully,

P. P.

LETTER II.

Sept. 23, 1785.

DEAR SIR,

I ASKED in my laſt Letter, "If "you had never obſerved the idle "and looſe behaviour of Children in "many places on a Sunday?"—It was an obſervation of this ſort which gave riſe to the thought of a Sunday School in the humane heart of Mr. RAIKES OF GLOCESTER.—He happily imagined, that Children might be collected together, on that day, to a good and uſeful purpoſe; and that he thought rightly, the numbers who have judged with him, is a ſtrong *preſumptive* proof.——But I will not reſt the cauſe merely on preſumptive

proofs; *Reaſon* will plead ſtrongly on the ſame ſide, and urge, not only the good which may be done, but the evil that may be prevented.

Where Children in numbers wander, play, and are diſſolutely ſcattered about the ſtreets on a Sunday, the ill conſequence, though perhaps it may not ſhow itſelf at the moment, will ſoon appear in their behaviour and converſation. Vices of every kind will imperceptibly ſpring up, and the corruption of ill example will act in full force upon the young mind.—And if, as is allowed on all hands, bad examples will fatally influence the ſtronger reaſon of Manhood, of what dreadful weight muſt they be upon the feeble powers of Childhood!—With what irreſiſtible force muſt they over-run the

the mind in that weak ſeaſon, and tear up the barriers of innocence and modeſty !

Oaths, indecent language, brutal paſſion, are catched from one child to another, like the quick and deadly contagion of a peſtilence, while they wander uncontroled in the idleneſs of Sunday's diſſipation : The ſtrong impreſſion of vice is made deep upon the yielding wax of the infant mind ; and if not very ſpeedily eraſed, it will remain a cold and hardened ſtamp upon the ſtubborn years of manhood.

You, who know the tender feelings of a Parent's heart, will inſtantly perceive what a ſtrong and affectionate call here is upon *every* Parent to prevent ſuch fatal impreſſions.

And if Parents neglect to do this, or cannot do it, what a call is here upon every generous mind to lend inſtant and earneſt aid—to ſtretch out the friendly hand to ſnatch ſuch innocents from the jaws of ruin—to lead them into a right path—to encourage ſuch a method of *behaviour and inſtruction on a Sunday*, as may direct and eſtabliſh them in it!

Yes, my Friend, here is a call, which, it gives me the trueſt pleaſure to ſay, *has been* attended to in this place:—The hearts and the hands of many here *have been* liberally opened; and I have the heart-felt ſatisfaction to ſee this plan eſtabliſhed amongſt us—to ſee it at leaſt endeavouring to prevent the *evil communications* of idleneſs and diſſipation on a Sunday from *corrupting the manners*

ners of the riſing generation in this ſpot ſo dear to me.

Excuſe the effuſion—which yet I cannot forbear indulging further.

Let me then point out to you the peculiar pleaſure this Inſtitution muſt afford to its ſupporters and encouragers; nay, even to, I had almoſt ſaid, unconcerned, but in this caſe none can be unconcerned, ſpectators. —Not to mention here the well-grounded delight ariſing from a reflexion that ſo many Little-ones are put into the right way, I attend now only to the ſweetly-pleaſurable ſenſations ariſing in the humaniſed heart from the *mere ſight* of a number of innocents thus collected together—taken from the paths of idleneſs and diſſipation, and offered, while yet

uncorrupted, as candidates for Heaven :—when

——the fair group we bind,
Kneel, and preſent it to the ſkies—

Then indeed it is a ſweet ſcene: There is not a diviner ſight upon the face of the earth—nothing more elevating to the human heart, than a collected body of Children, encouraged and ſupported in the exalted work of inſtruction and devotion, by the contribution of charitable benefactors.—You and I have often enjoyed this pleaſing ſight together in London; and "our hearts have "burned within us" at the ſcene. The *Aſylum*, the *Foundling*——how often have they dimmed our delighted eyes with the ſudden tear—melted our hearts with compaſſion—raiſed our ſouls with rapture, and given us

to

to enjoy what I will boldly call the *luxury* of the good and benevolent!

This ſweet enjoyment, it is in the power of the inhabitants of every place to procure for themſelves, by adopting this public-ſpirited plan. It muſt indeed be contracted within a ſmaller circle; but, however *ſmall* that may be, I will venture to pronounçe that the enjoyment will be *great*, and ſuch as will not only fill the mind with pleaſure at the moment, but afford ſubjects for cheerful reflexion to the lateſt hour of life.

Raiſed by the tenderneſs of my ſubject, am I enthuſiaſtic?——. I cannot help it:——If earneſtneſs, juſtified by reaſon, entitles me to that epithet—then be it ſo:—I am

an

an enthuſiaſt :—I diſclaim that coldneſs of heart, which on a ſubject that promotes the eſſential advantages of ſo many of our fellow creatures, and which is eſtabliſhed on ſolid grounds, can expreſs itſelf in the lifeleſs terms of unintereſting fable, or with the dry and unfeeling deductions of mathematical preciſion.

I am,

Dear Sir, &c.

LETTER III.

October 10, 1785.

DEAR SIR,

AS the ſcene affected me, I was led into a digreſſion in my laſt Letter, which I am ſure your own good heart will excuſe on conſidering the occaſion :—but I hope I have convinced you that by this plan, that general idleneſs, that looſe wandering, thoſe frequent ill-habits which Children contract on a Sunday, may be prevented; as proper and juſter notions of their duty on that ſacred day, and indeed on every day, are offered and inculcated to them; and the plants of virtue are ingrafted in thoſe young minds, where elſe,

through

through deplorable neglect, the noxious weeds of vice would inevitably grow and over-run them.

As the deſign appears thus uſeful, thus likely to be productive of eſſential good, I know that I ſhould hazard nothing in your judgement, nor be deemed enthuſiaſtic, if I ſhould venture to declare, that in my opinion *the hand of God is viſible*, as well in the firſt thought of an eſtabliſhment of this kind, as in the quick and rapid ſpreading. "Behold how "great a matter a little fire kindleth!" —from what a ſpark, my friend, ſeemingly faint, did this blaze at firſt ariſe!——A good and benevolent Man ſees, pities, and collects a few diſſolute and ſtraggling Children in the ſtreets of a city on a Sunday evening: He forms, embodies and inſtructs

inſtructs them. The example is copied; it is approved—it is ſpread—it is extended rapidly and quickly, like electric fire, through various parts of the kingdom; ſo that, from the ſmall beginning of a few hundreds about three years ago, more than fifty thouſand Children are, at the time I am writing, included in, and inſtructed by, this great, good and comprehenſive Inſtitution. I know not how this idea may in general be received; but I own to you, it ſtrikes me with awful and convincing force: it is no common or ordinary occurrence, the mere effect of human prudence: I confeſs that I ſee and reverence a ſuperior hand; an aſſertion which, though I make it to you in the confidence of private correſpondence, yet I ſhould not heſitate to declare in the moſt public and unreſerved manner:

manner :——For I am ſure of the grounds I go upon, when it is aſſerted by an authority which cannot err, that " every good and every perfect " thought is from above, and cometh " down from the Father of Lights."

I am not willing yet to leave the idea of ſomething *providential* in the beginning and ſpreading of this benevolent plan, without remarking the wonderful ſimilarity between this and another gracious interpoſition of Providence in favour of the human race :—I mean, *Inoculation* :——A dreadful diſtemper for many years makes fatal ravages, and baffles the powers of art, application and learning. Not many years ſince, an almoſt unknown and well-meaning individual* ariſes, attempts a plain and

* Mr. Sutton.

and ſimple plan of proceeding in the fatal diſorder, ſucceeds, weakens and nearly deſtroys its force, communicates his method, which is adopted, embraced and purſued; and thouſands and ten thouſands are now daily reaping the benefits of the deſign.——Thus in the plan before us, will you ſay, I draw a viſionary parallel, when I direct you to obſerve the dreadful diſorder of vice that has of late over-run the kingdom, and the horrible inſtances of robberies and murders that the laſt two years have particularly exhibited. As theſe originate chiefly among the lower claſs, do they not call for a ſtrong and powerful hand to ſtop them?—The hand of Juſtice and human Law has to this purpoſe been almoſt conſtantly and rigidly ex-

tended;* but, alas! in vain—When, lo! a good Man, and little known, ſteps forth, adopts a new and ſimple plan of reformation — purſues it— others copy from him; and the plan, which was at firſt but a *grain of muſtard ſeed*, ſoon becomes a large and ſpreading *tree*.——Thus far I am ſure my compariſon holds: that the parallel will run on in point of equal advantage, time alone can ſhow; yet there appear the beſt-founded reaſons on which to build our hopes, that the latter plan will be as eſſentially ſerviceable to the ſouls, as the former has been to the bodies of mankind.

When I expreſs an opinion like this, you will be prepared to receive my

* The number of condemned criminals at the laſt Aſſizes amounted to 286.

my anſwer to a doubt you once ſtarted—" Who will take this trou-
" ble upon them ?" But ere I anſwer it, let me correct my friend's expreſſion—*Trouble*, did you ſay ?—Your own active ſpirit would, in a buſineſs of public utility, overlook and annihilate trouble, and the goodneſs of your generous heart would convert it into pleaſure.——It ſhall therefore, if you will, be termed a *pleaſing trouble*.—Now then to your queſtion, " Who ſhall take it upon
" them ?" I readily anſwer, the Clergy :—It is the work of their Maſter, and they will engage in it with ready hands and open hearts. Numerous examples are not already wanting, and there will be more. Surely there is not a Clergyman who will not with the utmoſt readineſs ſtep forward to engage in this *pleaſing trou-*

ble—generally to ſolicit, encourage, promote and eſtabliſh a Fund and a School of this nature—and when it is eſtabliſhed, occaſionally to viſit, countenance, encourage and inquire.

And indeed the times call loudly for ſuch an exertion—ſuch a *labour of love*—which appears a reſource full of promiſing hope to a Nation running with precipitate impetuoſity the headlong career of vice. The horrid accounts of crimes among the lower ſort of people, with which the public prints abound; — crimes of the moſt cruel, unprincipled, and ſavage nature, which are produced in the metropolis in dreadful and frequent ſucceſſion, and which ſpread and ſpring up in the country* with equal

* Witneſs the horrible murder lately committed near Margate, on John Anſell;—and in Suſſex, on Mr. Burt the Surgeon.

equal magnitude — what do they, but call upon us, *trumpet-tongued*, to ſtretch out a hand to ſtop this growing evil, and apply ourſelves to the ſupport of a plan, which is likely to prevent the riſing generation from being as bad as the preſent, nay, worſe than this, for vice is never at a ſtand?

I am, &c.

LETTER IV.

October 25, 1785.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE one more obſervation to offer in favour of an inſtitution of this ſort; which, as it is *common*, might loſe its force, were it not for the peculiar and pathetic *power* with which it pleads in the parental heart, as well as for its undeniable *truth*.

Many, indeed the greater part, nay, I believe I might be juſtified in ſaying, *all* the unhappy criminals who ſuffer by the hand of Juſtice, owe their terrible end to idleneſs and ill habits on a Sunday, and to a neglect of

of the duties of the day—nay, moſt of them confeſs it at the fatal ſpot, and urge it upon their hearers with juſtice and earneſtneſs.

This is a mournful fact, and comes home to the human heart with ſuch convincing power, that every one will allow its weight: *facts* ſpeak for themſelves, and demand our aſſent irreſiſtibly.

Is there a Parent upon earth who would not feel its power? And as the Parents among the lower ranks are chiefly intereſted in this obſervation, what a proſpect does it open to *them!* They have the warm affections of Nature deeply engrafted in them: they

——*Know*
How tender 'tis to love the Babe that
milks them:

and

and they will ſtart and turn pale at the view; their hearts will bleed at the thought that a Child of theirs may be loſt, may be one of that fatal number who fall by the hand of Juſtice, for want of preſent care and attention: and they will turn with the keenly-pleaſing ſenſations of gratitude in their heart, and the glow of parental rapture on their cheek, towards a plan which opens its arms to their Children, which offers to rear them in habits of religion, of duty, of ſobriety, of humility, and induſtry:— To ſuch a plan (and *this* is ſuch a plan) the poor and grateful Parent, who cannot perform himſelf the neceſſary taſk, will preſent his Little-ones in full confidence, not only of ſecurity from ſcenes ſo terrible, but in juſt and pleaſing hopes of future good

good to themſelves, and to the public.

It is not long ſince I met with a very ſenſible dialogue, in the public papers, *on the Propriety and Uſe of inſtructing the lower Ranks of People.* The Author I know not; but there was a vein of good ſenſe, which was highly agreeable, running through the whole, while now and then a flaſh of ſpirited indignation broke out, that ſeemed to betray, in the animated writer, a deſire of keeping the lower orders in ignorant ſubjection.—Be that as it may, I mention it merely to inform you that this Writer, who ſtrains every nerve to prove that literary inſtruction is improper for the Poor, as productive of no good to them, and prejudicial to the Public, yet allows that the

Sunda

Sunday Schools are uſeful, if the inſtructions they convey are kept within proper limits.

Now this is the very thing I plead for: I urge that a juſt notion of the firſt principles of the Chriſtian Religion ſhould be inſtilled in the minds of the poorer ſort; that they ought to be able to read their Bible, to attend at Church, and have a ſenſe of their duty there; and be taught humility, ſobriety, and induſtry, by gentle admonitions. No reaſonable man, I preſume, will find fault with this; and further than this a Sunday School means not to go. Theſe are the *proper limits*; and within theſe bounds, if due attention be paid, proper cultivation beſtowed, and labour be united with affability, I think

think from my ſoul, that the happieſt and moſt ſerviceable fruits may be expected to ſpring from this Inſtitution.

It is not unpleaſant, however, to obſerve the ſhifts to which the advocates for ignorance in the lower ranks are ſometimes driven. An Acquaintance of mine was once converſing with a Choice Spirit of this kind, who, after having exhauſted his ſtore of arguments in favour of an unlettered peaſantry, concluded with aſking, whether it was right, by giving the labourer literary knowledge, to raiſe him above his ſtation? His Companion, after obſerving that ſuch an exaltation was not a neceſſary conſequence, ſeemed to give into his Adverſary's opinion — "Agreed then,"

" then," ſays he, " we will quench " this literary ſpirit; and if an infe- " rior perſon betrays an inclination " to knowledge, we will damp the " riſing flame—it is but juſtice."— 'Hold,' replies the other, 'I do not 'think it is perfectly juſtifiable to 'check a commendable ambition.'— " You do not? Then you muſt think " it perfectly allowable to afford him " the means of encouraging that " ambition; and thus what you take " away with one hand, you offer with " the other :"

Quo te teneam verſantem Protea nodo?

I have not time at preſent to mention to you ſome objections which have been offered to this Inſtitution; but I will at another opportunity. I do aſſure you, I do not decline

decline them becauſe they are formidable—I will be ready to meet them very ſoon, and you ſhall again hear from,

Dear Sir,

Your's, &c.

LETTER V.

Nov. 3, 1785.

DEAR SIR,

THOUGH the plan I plead for has been ſhewn to bear the ſtricteſt examination of ſound reaſon, and appears to be in fact, ſolid, juſt, reaſonable, uſeful, and neceſſary; yet objections ſtill have been, and are raiſed to it. You have ſeen Mr. Moore's Appendix. The objections which are there propoſed, are there alſo effectually anſwered—of them, therefore, I ſhall take no notice: but a few *local* ones I muſt mention to you.

The

The firſt is a formidable one indeed to me; for it lifts up its mercileſs axe againſt the root of my young and growing Inſtitution:——Thus it runs—*In pariſhes where there are already Charity Schools, there a Sunday School is neither uſeful nor neceſſary.* Now it happens that in this very pariſh we have not leſs than two Charity Schools, deſigned particularly for the ſervice of the Poor.—— What ſhall we do now? This bold phantom threatens to cruſh us at once; but, though

It comes in ſuch a queſtionable ſhape
I'll ſpeak to it———

I believe it will be found, upon fair examination, that where a Charity School is already eſtabliſhed, there a Sunday School is more *eſſentially uſeful* and *really neceſſary.* I ſee

you ſmile at this, as ſomething in the ſtyle of Biſhop Warburton, who uſed to take a pleaſure in granting his Adverſary's objections, and make them prove his own propoſitions. But have patience: I will neither dogmatiſe, nor overbear, as if (in the language of Hume) I was "educated "in the Warburtonian School;" but I will candidly ſearch, and fairly propoſe the truth. Let me then aſk, What does a Charity School teach? The anſwer is ready—*Reading*.—— A good and neceſſary foundation this, undoubtedly: But are we not to go on?—ſhall we ſtop there?—ſhall no building be raiſed, *becauſe* there is a foundation laid?—is it not more natural, as well as juſt, to ſay, that where the foundation of *Reading* is laid, there we may proceed to raiſe upon

upon it the fair fabric of *Virtue* and *Religion?*

Thus then, where there is a Charity School, the Sunday School is more *eſſentially uſeful*, becauſe the Children, by the advantages they have already received, may be ſuppoſed more capable of receiving inſtruction; and I preſume it will be allowed to be *really neceſſary*,—as neceſſary as that the houſe ſhould be built where the foundation is already laid.

Thoſe places therefore are fortunate (this amongſt the reſt), where there are Charity Schools;—for *half* the work is already done to our hands:—let the Sunday School be added to it, in order to make a complete and uſeful *whole*.

But never let the advantages which ſuch places enjoy, be urged as a motive why they ſhould not reap further good.——Surely ſuch a prohibition would be rather hard.

It may perhaps be ſaid——"The "deſign of many Charity Schools is "inſtruction in Religion, as well as "Reading."——It may be ſo: but the queſtion before us is, not what the *deſign may be*, but what *the practice is*.—It were ſomething, if all Charity Schools taught their little attendants even that firſt ſtep to knowledge—Reading:—but as for Religious Inſtruction, I believe it is almoſt univerſally thought to be no part of their concern.—It is true, the Children are taught to repeat their Catechiſm: ſo is the Parrot taught to repeat ſentences:—But I fear that the

the volubility and the underſtanding of the Child and the Bird, will too often be found very much alike.

I make not the leaſt doubt, but that if the keen oppoſers of this benevolent plan were to ſee what I have here written, they would aſk me with ſatirical aſperity —— " And, " pray, what more can your Sunday " School do?"—' What more, my ' good friend!' I ſhould anſwer, ' with ' God's bleſſing, it *may* do much ' more:—it certainly attempts much ' more;—it attempts to make a *ra-* ' *tional* impreſſion on the minds of ' Children;—it pays peculiar, and ' gentle, and affectionate attention ' to them;—it puts proper books into ' their hands, and kindly guides ' their underſtanding;—it encourages ' them, by the occaſional viſits of

' their

'their Miniſter and well-diſpoſed 'neighbours.—What! and are all 'theſe advantages nothing?—are all 'theſe no more, and of no greater 'weight, than may be expected in the 'common routine — in the heavy 'mill-horſe round of Charity Schools? '——Oh, you know but little of 'human nature, if you think ſo.'— But *you*, my friend, do not think ſo: ſuch a judgement is only to be formed by thoſe who look no deeper than the ſurface: they who know the depths of the human heart, know that there are advantages on which may be built the moſt rational and durable hopes.

And will any man, after all, tell me, "that, at this age, Religion "cannot be inſtilled?"—Perhaps in all the exactneſs of laboured reaſoning

ing it cannot; nor is it indeed expected, or even wiſhed, that it ſhould.—This is the tender age of impreſſion—and, by the means which I have endeavoured to point out, a good and uſeful impreſſion may be made, which will not eaſily be eraſed, and may happily laſt through the remainder of life:——And we may ſafely truſt to the knowledge of Solomon for the wiſdom of "training "a Child in the way he ſhould go— "for he will not depart from it when "he is old."

I have dwelt, perhaps, too long on this point; but the foundation on which I had been building here was ſo forcibly aimed at, that I could not but endeavour earneſtly and totally to remove the objection:—and after what I have ſaid, I believe that you

(which

(which is the ſame as ſaying an impartial judge) will allow that, ſo far from a Charity School being with juſtice urged as a motive to *prevent*, it is an additional reaſon and encouragement to promote and *eſtabliſh* a Sunday School.

Another objection which has been offered is, *The extreme difficulty, if not impoſſibility, of an inſtitution of this nature in a pariſh where the houſes are generally ſingle, and perhaps a mile or more diſtant from each other.*

I am ready to allow a difficulty here, but not an impoſſibility: yet what I do allow is ſo exceedingly ſlight, that it may eaſily be got over: in fact, it is but *half* a difficulty; it can prevail but in the Winter ſeaſon; in Summer it is nothing; in that fine

ſeaſon

ſeaſon of the year, I will venture to ſay, that unreſtrained Children will, in purſuit of childiſh amuſements, ramble thrice as far as might be neceſſary to engage them in a collected body, throughout the moſt ſtraggling pariſh in the kingdom.—This faint objection therefore cannot be urged as forcible; for ſurely we will not ſay, "Becauſe I cannot do *all* the "good I wiſh, therefore I will not "attempt *any* that is in my power."

Another objection has been whiſpered—and only whiſpered—for, as Mr. Bays ſays, "it is a difficult thing "to pen a whiſper well;" ſo theſe objectors, wiſely conſidering that it is a "difficult thing" to offer ſuch an objection as the following aloud, chuſe to convey it with heſitation, and gently hint,—*That in large manufacturing*

turing towns ſuch a plan may be of uſe; but in ſmaller places, and villages, it is of no ſervice. I imagine you will think it ſufficient anſwer to this *profound* objection, if I aſk, Whether a a village ſhould be wholly neglected becauſe it is not a city; or whether one, or ten, or twenty, demand not our charitable attention, as well as ten, or fifty, or a hundred, or a thouſand, in a larger or more extenſive diviſion?—Or if an anſwer like this be deemed not ſerious enough, I will reply in the words of Milton,

Great infers not excellence: the Earth,
Though in compariſon of Heaven ſo ſmall,
Nor gliſt'ring, may of ſolid good contain
More plenty than the Sun.

But you will be weary of my objections, and think it full time that I ſign myſelf,

Your's, &c.

LETTER VI.

Wye, May 10, 1786.

DEAR SIR,

FIVE Months have elapſed ſince the ſubject of Sunday Schools made a part of our correſpondence; and now you wiſh to renew it, by kindly inquiring after *mine* in particular. I aſſure you the inquiry gratifies me highly, as well as your commendation of what you call my *Sunday-exertions*.—The account you give me of the manner of ſpending the Sunday evening in Catholic Countries,

was worthy of your lively animating pen,* and the conſequent reflections worthy the goodneſs of your heart:—but, I apprehend, you a little miſtake the deſign of our Inſtitution:—it means certainly to inculcate, in the young breaſt, an attention to, and reverence for, the Sabbath; but it has nothing in it ſevere, or preciſe, or puritanical:—it wiſhes to ſteer between the levity of ſuch as caſt off all ſerious regard to the day, and that ſevere ſpirit "which† (in the words of Dr. Johnſon) "is offended with "frivolous and empty deviations "from exactneſs."

In

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* This ſubject was diſcuſſed at large, between the Author and a Friend well known to the Muſe; the Friend was then abroad.

† Anecdotes of Dr. Johnſon—p. 228.

In regard to the School *here*, which I have been ſo happy as to eſtabliſh, your inquiries may be anſwered beſt, by referring you to the Appendix of a Sermon lately publiſhed by the good Dean of Canterbury. You will there find the particulars which you deſire; in addition to which, I am ſure it will give you pleaſure to learn, that the pecuniary encouragement I have met with has been generous to a great degree. My Infant Nurſery—(you know my Botanical inclination, and therefore will not wonder at my alluſion, which has juſtice and truth in it, if my warm hopes be anſwered, that the Children are Plants in ſome future ſeaſon to be tranſplanted into the Paradiſe of God;)—my Infant Nurſery, then, has met with peculiarly kind aſſiſtance, by a ſubſcription

from two Benefactors* of five guineas each; and I have been so fortunate as to meet with assistance of another kind, without which my plan would have moved on with difficulty, and heavily. Mr. Moore, in his Letter to Dr. Horn, justly and truly says,—"*that* Clergyman is peculiarly fortunate who meets with "such respectable Laymen, in his "parish, as are willing to assist him "in these Christian labours, not only "with their purse, but by sharing "the cares of superintendance with "him." —— I am, my Friend, that peculiarly fortunate man:—

Two

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* It is with grateful pleasure I take this public opportunity of acknowledging the generosity of Mr. HATTON, of Eastwell Park, and Mrs. WOODYER, of this place.——Nor does

two* of my neighbours, whoſe general worth (as you know) receives additional luſtre from their kindneſs in this inſtance, heartily put their hands to this "labour of love;" and ſeldom a Sunday paſſes but one or both pay obliging attendance and attention.——Your generous heart would expand at the ſight of my Little-ones:—their decency and order in the time of divine ſervice, their attention and regularity in the two hours of inſtruction after, are highly pleaſing. As the weather is now warm, we continue (and ſhall do ſo through the ſummer) in the Church: this, you know, is large;

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does the opportunity of thus openly declaring the aſſiſtance I receive from the frequent and perſonal attendance of two of my neighbours, give me leſs ſatisfaction.

and the ſpace is ſo pleaſingly filled, that it affords my heart the trueſt gratification. When I am ſo happy as to ſee you here, I will give you this feaſt of the mind:—you ſhall go with me;—*we will take ſweet counſel together, we will walk in the Houſe of God as Friends.*

Since I wrote to you in November laſt; I find this public-ſpirited plan has continued ſpreading — May it ſtill continue to ſpread! at leaſt to keep pace with the enormities of vice, and fix a firm foundation for a generation of riſing Poor, who may be better than the preſent hapleſs race, which affords ſuch frequent victims to the hands of Juſtice.— Where is the heart that bleeds not (your's does, I am ſure) at the alarming number?——The public prints inform

inform us of no leſs than *two hundred and eighty ſix*, at the laſt Lent aſſizes!

This is ſuch an account as ſtrikes every body; and it was with great propriety, that the worthy Chairman at our laſt Quarter-Seſſions at Maidſtone, took public notice of it in his Charge to the Grand Jury. He recommends a method of prevention, which is good indeed, but, I fear, not likely to be much practiſed; and, if practiſed, not generally effectual: "Let every man," ſays he, "take "care of his own family, and thoſe "under his care and inſpection— "let him inſtruct his Children and "Servants to fear God and honour "the King; and the *work is done!*" This excellent advice is given to *Gentlemen*, and, if ſuch would follow it, would be in a great degree uſeful;

ful:—but very few Gentlemen, I believe, chuſe to take that care upon them which is here recommended; and, if they did, *their* families and ſervants *only* would reap the benefit: What, in the mean time, muſt become of that large part of the community, the Poor, to whom the attention is not directed to extend? How then *is the work done?* If done in any degree, it plainly appears to be but *half* done; for at leaſt one half of the community are left out of the account.——You will perceive by this, that, though I think the advice is good in ſome degree, yet a more comprehenſive direction might have been offered, a ſcheme that would have built upon a wider and more ſure foundation;—in a word, you will perceive, that I regret extremely, that a reſpectable Magiſtrate

ſhould

ſhould ſuffer ſo fair an opportunity to paſs by him, without recommending that Plan which has been the ſubject of theſe Letters, and to which the Public has given ſtrong ſanction, by an extenſive and very general encouragement.

And I am authoriſed in aſſerting, that the encouragement has been great, not only by the Sunday Schools around us, and ſtill riſing round us in this county—but by the numerous bodies of the ſame kind in various parts of England,—and, to crown the whole, by that pleaſing account given, a few days ago, by the report of the Committee for the Support and Encouragement of Sunday Schools,—"That they have two "hundred and eighty five ſubſcri- "bers——that the money already "raiſed

" raiſed is twelve hundred and thir-
" teen pounds, one thouſand of
" which is placed in the public
" funds—that Schools are eſtabliſhed
" in fourteen places, chiefly near
" London, containing in all one
" thouſand and eighty three Chil-
" dren, —— beſides aſſiſting other
" Schools with Books, &c. in which
" ſix hundred and eighty Children
" more are trained." —— What a pleaſing account, my Friend!—You will join with me, I know, in calling down the bleſſing of Heaven on theſe generous undertakings. How delightful muſt be the reflections of thoſe who have thus liberally promoted them!—And for Mr. RAIKES, who firſt ſet the ſcheme on foot—how great muſt be his pleaſure, in ſeeing it thus nobly extended!—His heart, I am ſure, glows with love to

his

his fellow-creatures, and with gratitude to God, who firſt gave him the exalted thought:—"Oh, how I envy "him his feelings!"

And now I am got thus far into a train of noticing the accounts which the public papers give, it is impoſſible that I can paſs by the ſenſible addreſs on this ſubject lately offered to the Public, from Mancheſter, without expreſſing my earneſt approbation of it. It was juſt and elegant; and there never was a ſentence more true, nor more pointedly ſtrong, than the aſſertion "that it is im-"poſſible to be *idle* and at the ſame "time be *innocent*."

On looking over your Letter, I find you wiſh to know if I did not preach on the occaſion of beginning my

my Sunday School; and, if I did, you deſire to ſee my Sermon, adding, "that you are ſure I muſt be ani-"mated at the firſt ſight of my little "flock before me."—You are perfectly right: I did preach; and indeed I was warmed with the pleaſing ſcene.—You will find that, in my Letter to Dr. Horn, I mentioned this circumſtance; but I did not enlarge upon it: I forbore, as confining myſelf rather to facts than ſentiments on *that* occaſion: But on this I ſhall be more explicit; I know you love that I ſhould give the effuſions of the heart, naturally as they flow.

As to a ſight of my diſcourſe, you have already had it.—I ſee you put on a look of ſurpriſe, but I aſſure you it is true:—To ſpeak plainly and freely,

freely, the ſubſtance of it was intervoven (with large additions indeed) into the long Letters I wrote to you, five months ago, upon this ſubject. The concluſion, indeed, you have not ſeen; and as that was more peculiarly addreſſed to the heart, ſo well do I know you, that I will take the trouble (little as I love trouble) of tranſcribing it for you.

But I muſt firſt obſerve, that I had upwards of *one hundred Children* before me.—If I was warm, let the ſcene plead my excuſe; with you I know it will: For could I look round me, and be unmoved? Thus then, in concluſion, I addreſſed the congregation.

———For "*It is not the will of* "*our heavenly Father, that one of theſe*

" *Little-ones ſhould periſh*:" yet, if left
" to themſelves, if ſuffered to con-
" tinue in a ſtate of idleneſs, igno-
" rance, and a neglect of this holy
" day—in habits of Sabbath-break-
" ing, ſuch muſt be their hapleſs lot.

" But, bleſſed be God! they are
" not ſuffered to continue in this
" neglect:—collected together here
" in this ſacred place, we have the
" happineſs to ſee a foundation laid
" on *this day* for better hopes.—
" And now, how can I forbear?—I
" will not forbear to ſpeak the full-
" neſs of my heart. To attempt to
" plead, or to convince, further than
" I have already done, is needleſs:—
" *There is a pleaſing ſcene*, which
" ſhows I have not pleaded in vain:
" ——*There is a ſight*, which ſpeaks
" conviction

" conviction in the ſtrongeſt and
" moſt lively manner.

" And now we have thus happily
" begun this beneficial plan, how is
" it to be ſupported, ſo as to render
" it effectual to the purpoſes for
" which it was intended?

" —Surely by attention and care—

" Now, whatever attention may
" be paid to it by others, (and it is
" to be hoped attention *will* be paid)
" there is one ſet of people whom I
" call upon in the moſt earneſt man-
" ner on this occaſion;—the perſons
" I mean are *Parents*.—You, Pa-
" rents, are invited by all the love
" you bear to your Children, by
" every tenderneſs of Nature, to give
" your attention:—*with* that, the

 " happieſt

" happieſt fruits may be hoped for;
" *without* it, nothing can be done.—
" My Chriſtian Friends, be watchful
" therefore.——The pleaſing ſight
" before me is a delightful *beginning*;
" but do you *continue* to encourage
" your Children's attendance—watch
" their improvement.—Their young
" minds cannot be ſuppoſed to ſet a
" proper value upon the advantages
" offered them.——The blame of
" neglect therefore (if neglect there
" ſhould be) cannot reſt with *them*.
" But *you* know that the means of
" induſtry, ſobriety, decency, and
" religion, are here offered to your
" Children: *You*, then, will not neg-
" lect the uſeful offer: *You* will lead
" them by the hand, with all the
" fondneſs of a Parent's love, to theſe
" happy means, and continue them
" there with conſtant perſeverance.

" But

" But I forbear: your own hearts
" will ſpeak to you in the *moſt forcible*
" *language*: they will confirm every
" ſyllable I have ſaid.

" After thus addreſſing Parents in
" particular, I now ſpeak to you all,
" my Friends, in general, and in-
" treat your continued encourage-
" ment of this deſign.

" I offer my heart-felt congratula-
" tions, and warm thanks, to ſuch
" as have aſſiſted me in it. Generous
" have been the ſubſcriptions of many
" amongſt you—generous and large.
" ——May the God of Heaven re-
" ſtore it to you fourfold!—And
" many have freely and kindly of-
" fered their *mite*—To ſuch I with
" pleaſure apply the words of our
" Saviour—*Whoſoever ſhall give to*

" *drink, unto one of theſe Little-ones, a*
" *cup of cold water only in the name of*
" *a Diſciple—verily, I ſay unto you he*
" *ſhall in no wiſe loſe his reward.*

" And now, I here bleſs God for
" this fair beginning of a good de-
" ſign :—To his holy name be the
" praiſe !—and to what we have here
" *planted* and *watered*, may his effec-
" tual bleſſing give the *increaſe !*"

My Letter is now grown ſo unreaſonably long, that I ought to finiſh directly. Yet I muſt add one word in regard to the printed Addreſs which accompanies this. I diſperſed it among the different families in this place : ſometimes the Children read it to me on Sundays ; and, by the means of this, I take occaſion to converſe with them familiarly

larly, and adviſe and direct them—You will perceive that it is written in the plaineſt and moſt unadorned language—but in that which is moſt dear to you, and of which you are a maſter—the language of the heart.

I am, &c.

AN ADDRESS

TO THE

PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Of WYE.

☞ *The following is the Addreſs mentioned at the Concluſion of the laſt Letter.*

TO THE

PARENTS.

I INTREAT you, as you value the welfare of your Children, to attend to what I ſay in this ſincere and earneſt Addreſs to you.

You love your Children, I have no doubt; and it is becauſe I am aſſured of

of this, that I ſpeak to you in this manner.

You would be glad to ſee them good, and to continue good as they grow up; but this is what you can never expect to ſee, unleſs they are taught to know, and to do, their duty to God and Man. Moſt of you have not time to give them this knowledge; and indeed many of you, if you had time, *cannot* give it them: this knowledge is offered them by the *Sunday School*, and without hindering the work of the week.

Now I moſt earneſtly deſire you, to keep them to a conſtant attendance on a Sunday, both at Church and at School. It is very likely that your Children may wiſh frequently to be abſent: they are young, and know not

not the value of the good that is offered them: you ought to know better. For their ſakes do not indulge them in idleneſs, and abſence, from trifling excuſes. Such an indulgence, which you may think is kindneſs, is really, and indeed, unkindneſs—it is cruel.

I further deſire you to keep this little Book carefully; hear them read it—attend to, and encourage them—and take care that it be not careleſsly torn or loſt.

You know very well that there can be no motive for this, but the good of your Children—of that, indeed, I am very deſirous: and you know too, that I have many good friends in this place, who encourage and aſſiſt me in this undertaking: to them I am obliged,

obliged, and ſo are you :—in thus being my friends, they are yours.

Let not, I beſeech you, this attention be loſt by your neglect :—it will be loſt, if you ſhould not do your part in this *labour of love*, by encouraging their attendance at Church and School.

My dear Friends and Neighbours, that God would bleſs you, and your Children, is the ſincere prayer of

Your affectionate Miniſter,

P. PARSONS.

TO THE

CHILDREN.

Wye, Dec. 15, 1785.

MY GOOD CHILDREN,

I TAKE this method of writing to you, becauſe I think you will pay moſt regard to it. What is ſaid, may ſoon paſs out of your mind, and be forgotten; what is written continues before you, and may be looked upon at any time.

And I would have you conſider this, as a letter written in particular *to you*, who are now reading it; as a letter

letter to you, my good Child, from one who tenderly wiſhes you well; from one who affectionately hopes to ſee you good, to ſee you grow in goodneſs as you grow in years, that you may be happy here and hereafter.

I deſire you therefore to keep this, and read it very often, and very carefully.

The deſign of your being called to a School on a Sunday is kind to you; it is the trueſt kindneſs: it is for your good. Your benefactors, who bring you together, and provide for you the means of inſtruction, can have no other intention than to ſerve you, than to do you the greateſt favour in the world, by giving you that knowledge which may make you good and happy, if you do not neglect it.

Conſider your Sunday School in this manner, and you will be pleaſed with it; you will be glad to attend it diligently and conſtantly; you will love inſtruction, and by that means will gain real advantage from it.

I aſſure you I am pleaſed with your ready attendance hitherto; and it is my warm wiſh, that you may think yourſelf happy in this opportunity of learning and doing your duty every Sunday. Indeed, my dear Child, you have the greateſt reaſon to think ſo, as by this means the greateſt good is offered you. Let it not then ſlip by you at any time. Make no vain or trifling excuſes to keep away. Neglect not your attendance: be conſtant: be diligent: be attentive.

I ſincerely

I ſincerely wiſh you to love goodneſs and learning; and therefore it is that I ſpeak to you in this earneſt and affectionate manner. I rather wiſh you to be directed by love than by fear. Let love therefore draw you to a conſtant attendance and diligent improvement: but if, after all, you will (which yet I hope you will not) neglect and be idle, ſtill your Parents will inſiſt on your attendance—and your duty then will become more hard to you: but I will not dwell upon this; I am unwilling even to ſuppoſe ſuch a thing as idleneſs or neglect in you, my good Child. You will ſee the truth of what I adviſe you to—and you will be good, from love of goodneſs, rather than from fear of ſeverity.

See with what affectionate earneſtneſs you are here called upon. You

will obſerve, that by this I think you are and will be good, and that you will do all that we hope for from you: and I tell you this, that you may know the good hopes we have of you —that I may encourage you—that I may tenderly draw you, *as a father does his children*, to the love and attainment of goodneſs. I uſe this motive becauſe I think it a good and a ſtrong one, and likely to affect your young heart: and no motive is, or will be omitted by any of your friends, which may be of true ſervice to you.

If you are drawn by this motive of love to your duty, you will not only attend conſtantly and diligently; but you will alſo improve and advance. You will not only read, but you will endeavour to underſtand and to remember what you learn; you will lay it

it up in your heart; you will keep it in mind, and make it of uſe to you in every ſtep of your life.

When I ſpeak of improvement, you will obſerve, that no more is expected from you than a love of knowledge will certainly produce in your tender years: if Children loved to learn, as you, I hope, now always will, I am very ſure they would improve more than they uſually do. Be you then, my Child, a ſweet example to others in this regard: attend: be diligent: read carefully, and not, like a parrot, without underſtanding what you read.—In a word, though you certainly cannot improve in an equal degree with thoſe of riper years, yet, if you will be perſuaded to love your duty, you will improve in a

good degree; and every degree of improvement is truly valuable.

God Almighty has placed you in ſuch a ſtate in this world, that it is very likely, when you grow up, you will be called to get your bread by the labours of your hands. In this ſtate of life, you are to be humble, honeſt, diligent, and contented.—God, who placed you in this ſituation, knows what is beſt for you; and, on this conſideration, you will ſubmit to it with humility, and do your duty with readineſs and pleaſure. This, among other neceſſary inſtructions, is what is intended to be inſtilled into your tender mind by the Sunday School, to be of uſe to you in your riper years; and I mention this particular now, to prevent your being vain of knowledge, whatever

whatever knowledge it may be that you attain. Never be above your lowly ſituation; for inſtruction is given you, not to make you vain, but to render you meek, and humble, and contented, and modeſt.

The mention of modeſty induces me to ſay a little to you upon that excellent virtue. A pert, bold, inſolent boy, or girl, is a horrid character: in a boy, impudence is bad and vile; but in a girl, it is indeed beyond all expreſſion ſhocking. Shun you, my good Child, this deteſted fault, and cheriſh the ſweet virtue of humble modeſty: preſerve it as a jewel: in your childhood it is an ornament, and will draw the regard and love of all good perſons to you; as you advance in years, it will not only be an ornament, but a defence too againſt

againſt the many ſnares of a vicious world, which now I ſhall not enlarge upon.

There is a fault, too common amongſt ſuch Children as are not taught better, which I muſt next caution you againſt: I mean, Lying. Always ſpeak the truth: a liar is really and truly a hateful creature: Who will or can love—who will or can truſt, ſuch a one?—What then muſt become of you when you grow up, and come into that ſtate of ſervice which ſeems intended for you, if you are given to tell lies in your infant years—in thoſe years which are the foundation of your future life?

And never, never let an Oath come out of your lips:—I *have* heard, and been ſhocked to hear, oaths from the lips

lips of Children, as I paſſed the ſtreets : I pray God to aſſiſt our endeavours to cure them of this horrid vice!—I confeſs that I have not heard any thing of this ſort lately, and am therefore willing to think that I ſee, in ſome degree, the good effects of our Sunday's inſtruction; our good Children know better, and behave better:—I aſſure you, it gives me pleaſure to ſay this, and I ſay it for your encouragement: but yet I muſt call upon you again, to beware of the crime of ſwearing. Dread the vile cuſtom. I wiſh you always to have a reverence and awe of God upon your mind; and, if that be the caſe, you

Will ſtart at oaths which make a Chriſtian quake.

I have before obſerved to you, that the

the ſtate of life you are moſt likely to be called to, is a *ſtate of ſervice*. I deſire you ever to conſider this, and direct your attention, as you grow up, to ſuch virtues as may be of chief uſe to you in that ſtate. Of theſe, my dear, *honeſty* is one of the firſt. Your character, your future livelihood, will depend upon your honeſty.—Avoid therefore *ſtealing*, the common fault of Children who are not brought up in a ſenſe of duty: but you *are* brought up in ſuch a ſenſe—you know that diſhoneſty is a great and terrible fault; and you may be ſure, that ſtealing even the mereſt trifles, is not only wicked, but will be the beginning of ſuch a courſe of vice, as perhaps you will continue in till you bring yourſelf to ruin, and very likely break your aged Parents hearts. Theſe are ſuch cer-

tain

tain truths, as I hope you will give ear to in earneſt: and always be honeſt—ſo honeſt, as not to do an unjuſt thing on any account—as honeſt when alone, and in your power to be otherwiſe, as if you were in public, and every one's eyes upon you at once.

When I firſt began this letter to you, my good Child, I had ſome thoughts of drawing out before you a ſhort account of your *Chriſtian duties*; but, as I reflect that you are taught theſe things more fully in your School, I forbear. And indeed, as this letter is rather deſigned to invite and encourage you to be inſtructed, than for inſtruction itſelf, it would lengthen too much if I were here to do as I once deſigned: yet, as occaſion offered, and thoughts for your

good

good naturally aroſe in my mind, I have mentioned ſome duties to be practiſed, and ſome faults to be avoided: to ſpeak of them all, would be here too much; they are therefore left to be the employment of your School-inſtruction.

Yet one duty I cannot forbear mentioning, becauſe I wiſh moſt ſtrongly to preſs it upon your mind; I mean, your duty *to God in prayer.* It is, indeed, the firſt of all duties, which if you neglect, there is but little hopes of your paying regard to any other.—But you will not neglect it: you are taught otherwiſe: by conſtant attendance on Sunday, you are brought up in a habit of going to Church, and praying in public. Never loſe the good impreſſion this will give you; and, as you grow up, let your

your attendance be as regular, by choice, and a ſenſe of duty, as it is now by cuſtom and obligation.

Prayer to God *in private*, is a duty that you muſt not omit. Every morning you ought to pray as ſoon as you riſe, and again every evening before you go to bed: he, or ſhe, that neglects this duty, and riſes up, and lies down, juſt as the beaſts in the fields do, without offering up a prayer to God, cannot expect God's bleſſing on any thing they do; and, without the bleſſing of God, nothing can proſper.

And now, my good Child, not to burden your memory too much, I will ſoon conclude: you ſee how truly and how affectionately deſirous, I, and all your good friends who en-

courage this Sunday School, are for your good and welfare in this world, and your happineſs and ſalvation in the next: and we hope to ſee the happy fruits of our deſign, in your good and proper behaviour. Be conſtant in your attendance: be well-behaved, ſilent, and diligent, in your School: and in your lives, be modeſt; be humble; be ſober; be contented; be obedient; be induſtrious.

Remember that Jeſus Chriſt, your Redeemer, ſaid, "Suffer the little "Children to come unto me."

Attend therefore upon him, that is, be good, in every ſtep of your life: you are called to goodneſs by a thouſand kind invitations,

Your

Your God and Saviour calls you; your fond Patents call you; your kind and generous neighbours, in the place, invite you—and all theſe preſſing calls are warmly joined in, and here ſincerely urged to you, by

Your affectionate Friend

and Miniſter,

P. PARSONS.

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